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ABSTRACT

Piedmont Technical College (PTC), in South Carolina, has developed a highly collaborative style of leadership which emphasizes interdependence and shared responsibility among a wide variety of organizations and groups in the community. PTC initiatives designed to promote quality management and strategic leadership include the formation of a participatory planning group composed of faculty, staff, and administrators to formulate, evaluate, and develop the college's institutional plan; the creation of a computer system to provide data on student retention; and the provision of real-time access to data to all members of the college community. PTC has also been designated by the state Technical Education System as a Resource Center in the areas of automated manufacturing, international business, and quality. Other efforts related to quality processes and measures include courses on the principles, methods, and tools of quality management offered to faculty, staff, and area employers and employees; courses on the habits of highly effective people offered to the college community; and courses on quality training for the workforce offered to areas employers and employees. In an effort to promote educational and organizational development, PTC is involved in various collaborative efforts with Greenwood County (South Carolina) and 'ocal businesses via the Piedmont Excellence Process, providi. , training sessions in quality management to businesses and public agencies, distance learning initiatives; and Project PACE, designed to promote collaborative learning in the region. (TGI)

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Getting Quality Good Enough: Collaborative Leadership for Organizational & Community Development

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Paper presented at the Annual International Conferenceof the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development on Teaching Excellence and Conference of Administrators
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Piedmont Technical College
Greenwood, South Carolina

Getting Quality Good Enough:

Collaborative Leadership For Organizational & Community Development

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National Institute for Leadership & Institutional Effectiveness
October 14-17, 1995

National Institute for Leadership
& Institutional Effectiveness

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR ORGANIZATIONAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Piedmont Technical College , one of the 16 public two-year colleges in South Carolina's system, serves the largest geographic area in the system: seven counties, 3,600 square miles, over 200,000 citizens, ten school districts, and over 4,000 businesses. Over the past two decades Piedmont has emerged as a proactive, visionary leader within its seven counties, within the state, and across the nation. The College's administration, faculty, and staff have earned a steady procession of leadership awards and positions: many presidencies of local, state, and national organizations, well over a dozen individual and organizational awards for leadership and innovation, authorship of several text and professional books, and designation as the state resource center in three separate areas.

In this process the College has developed a highly collaborative style of leadership which emphasizes interdependence and shared responsibility among a wide variety of organizations and groups. The model is not one of "we are the leader and will help you find the way", but rather one of "we're all in it together, and must jointly find the way". The various activities and initiatives documented in the rest of this nomination embody and reflect that collaborative leadership style.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

The impetus toward quality management and strategic leadership has required that Piedmont move steadily toward more data-based and long-term strategic management. The College's journey in this direction is evidenced by the following indicators:

1. ***Core Planning System.*** The College has implemented a participatory planning system which revolves around a core group of individuals representating all aspects of the campus (faculty, staff, and administrative). This group formulates, evaluates, and develops the institutional plan for the college, then invites all members of the college to participate in a one-day program to operationalize the plan. This core group also participates in team-building and work group programs prior to and during the planning process.

2. ***Data-Driven Retention Planning.*** In order to get a clearer handle on the actual status and patterns related to term-to-term and year-to-year student retention, the College created a detailed computer program and system for collecting, displaying, tracking, and reviewing this data. The caliber of this program and system was such that it received the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's Exemplary Effort Award in 1994.

3. ***Data Generation and Access Systems.*** The College found itself with a growing need to track data on an on-going basis. Thus the College created a series of programs and structures which provided all members of the college community with real-time access to key data. Two examples are: the Electronic Fact Book, which is an on-line, menu-driven view of large amounts of student, facility, and personnel data; and the Count Program, which provides on-line, real-time data on headcount, FTE's and goal attainment. All faculty and staff have been provided with immediate computer access (mostly on their own desks) to enable them to access and use this data.

4. ***Institutional Effectiveness.*** The College has been a state leader in several aspects of implementation of the state's institutional effectiveness system development and implementation, as a means to improve the quality of all aspects of the educational community.

QUALITY PROCESSES & MEASURES

Following are six initiatives which exemplify the leadership which Piedmont Technical College has taken, both internally and externally, to promote quality processes and measures. The Piedmont Excellence Process outlined in the previous section is also an example of that leadership.

5. ***Quality Resource Center.*** The South Carolina Technical Education system has implemented a process for identifying and supporting one of its 16 institutions as the state "Resource Center" in a particular area of education. Piedmont has been designated as the Resource Center in three areas: automated manufacturing, international business, and quality. This final designation recognized the College's extensive commitment to quality principles in both business and education. It further provided the platform which has allowed the College to conduct research, collect and disseminate materials, offer local and statewide training, and connect the technical college system with the various international networks dealing with quality. For example, the College hosts quarterly meetings across the state to allow the other 15 technical colleges to exchange ideas and share quality activities and resources, under Piedmont's aegis.

6. ***Quality Transformation Course.*** The Director of the College's Quality Resource Center worked collaboratively with people from Lander University and a local school district to create and teach a year-long course (six hours of graduate credit) in quality principles for educators. This course is now being taught for its third straight year to teams of public school and college educators who want to explore how to base continuous improvement of the individual and of their educational system on the principles of total quality. These participants are then prepared to take back and apply this learning in their own educational setting, thus initiating a broad transformation of educational processes throughout the region.

7. ***Covey-Based Faculty/Staff Training.*** Last year the College designed a structured course of study based on Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. This course was offered to the entire college community (faculty, staff, and administration) over a period of an

academic year, with one habit being covered monthly at a faculty-staff meeting. These meetings were then followed during the month by on-going dialogue groups where the participants could both explore the particular habit and apply it to their own and the college's activities and practices. The intent was to embed these principles - and the quality processes which they incorporate - into college activities and into the personal lives of the faculty, staff, and administrators.

8. ***Langford Continuous Improvement Course.*** The College, in collaboration with area businesses, educators, and the Chamber of Commerce, helped establish and participated in a four-day "transformation of education" course taught in August, 1994 in Greenwood by David Langford, a pioneer in the continuous improvement of education through application of Deming's quality principles. Piedmont sent ten participants to this special course, and plans to send a similar number in 1996, when Dr. Langford again comes to Greenwood to present the course.

9. ***Quality Training for the Workforce.*** The College has created and offered to hundreds of area employers and employees a series of courses covering the principles, methods, and tools of quality management.

10. ***Deming Institute.*** The Director of Piedmont's Quality Resource Center has been asked to serve on the development and outreach committee of the Deming Institute, a Washington-based think tank which promotes the philosophy of the late Dr. W. Edwards Deming.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Five initiatives exemplify the depth and direction of the strategic leadership exerted by Piedmont Technical College in an effort to promote educational and organizational development.

11. ***The Piedmont Excellence Process.*** In 1985 Piedmont met with a small group of area business leaders to explore how the emerging concepts of quality management could be infused throughout our region. That beginning led to creation of the Piedmont Excellence Process, a formal organization which systematically promotes (and often pioneers) ways to embed the quality philosophy and principles into manufacturing, service, government, education, health care, and small businesses. Over a thousand people participate annually in PEP's monthly, quarterly, annual, and special training sessions and meetings.

12. ***Business/Education Partnership.*** In 1977 Piedmont launched a project to identify the fundamental workplace success competencies needed by area employers and by graduates of all of the College's academic programs. This early initiative has led to a continuing series of activities focused on this crucial purpose, including: creation of two academic courses (and publishing of two related texts) dealing with generic workplace competence; establishment of seven 'core competencies' as target outcomes of all degree and diploma programs; collaborative development with area CEO's and educational leaders of a specific set of basic competencies needed in all workplaces and expected of all graduates, with a concomitant implementation

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strategy involving area schools, employers, colleges, and universities; advocacy of and leadership in the area's tech-prep program; and introduction of graduate credit and non-credit courses which introduce teachers to the realities of the workplace. Gradually, this concern for a match between educational outcomes and workplace needs has become a common denominator and goal for almost all of the area's economic and educational leaders.

13. ***Distance Learning.*** Piedmont has developed a long-term plan for educational renovation in its 3,600 square mile service area which is based on implementation of cutting-edge electronic technology. This plan, the Piedmont Electronic Network ('The PEN'), will place 24 fully-interactive, interchangeable electronic classrooms in key locations in this region: in every high school, in a community center in every county, at Lander University, and at Piedmont Technical College. Cumulatively, The PEN will allow public schools to share resources and to offer courses which most of them could not offer alone. The PEN will make it possible for residents of the six outlying counties to enroll in college courses locally, and in small numbers: an option which is not economically feasible if classes cannot be electronically combined. Although The PEN will serve virtually all public school students, and many enrolled at Lander University, Piedmont has assumed full responsibility for planning, designing, and acquiring the funding needed to create The PEN, as a collaborative long-term investment across the region.

14. ***Project PACE.*** Piedmont has collaborated with many individual industries on many different educational improvement activities. An example is Project PACE, in which the College teamed up with a local industry (Cooper Power Systems) to develop a regional capability to infuse collaborative learning techniques into public schools and higher education across the region. This project, within a single year, introduced these team-based instructional techniques to 184 public school and college teachers, infused these techniques into at least 67 courses, and impacted at least 1,889 students. Almost all of the area's ten school districts were involved. The project's success was so great that Cooper Power Systems awarded the College a second full year of financial support to continue the effort, and then funded an additional innovative activity: to create a local videotape demonstrating to students, parents, and teachers the types of workplace competencies needed for economic success in the 21st century.

15. ***LifeLong Learning.*** The College has been a key player in a five-year initiative to establish a vision of Greenwood County as a life-long learning community: a method for focusing and channeling long-term community improvement efforts throughout the county. This initiative has now involved dozens of businesses, government, all aspects of education, the Chamber of Commerce, most of the social service and criminal justice agencies, and dozens of volunteer agencies. This degree and type of collaboration, with Piedmont as a critical link, has resulted in Greenwood County being the only community cited as a life-long learning community in Peter Senge's recent Lifelong Learning Fieldbook (1994).

Cumulatively, these and other related efforts in the academic, information, and community outreach areas represent a substantial, long-standing, and effective commitment to educational and community improvement through collaborative leadership.

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Strategic Management

- ☑ Core Planning System
- ☑ Data-Driven Retention Program
- ☑ Data Generation and Access Systems
- ☑ Institutional Effectiveness

Quality Processes & Measures

- ☑ Quality Resource Center
- ☑ Total Quality Learning Course: Lander University
- ☑ Total Quality Learning Course: David Langford
- ☑ Seven Habits of Highly Effective People-
  For College Faculty and Staff
- ☑ Center For Performance Excellence
- ☑ Deming Institute

Strategic Leadership

- ☑ The Piedmont Excellence Process
- ☑ Business / Education Partnerships
- ☑ Distance Learning
- ☑ Project PACE
- ☑ Lifelong Learning

The Piedmont Excellence Process

- ☑ Est. in 1985
- ☑ Joint College and Area Business Initiative
- ☑ Promote Quality Philosophy and Principles
- ☑ Strategy: Monthly meetings, Annual Conference and Special Training Sessions
- ☑ College Training Arm of PEP

Business / Education Partnerships

- ☑ Identification of Workplace Competencies
- ☑ Creation of Courses on Generic Workplace Competencies
- ☑ Establishment of Seven "Core Competencies" as Educational Outcomes
- ☑ Coordination of DACUM for Regional Industry (Greenwood Partnership Initiative)

Project PACE

- ☑ Collaborative Learning Techniques
- ☑ Impact on Regional Education System
  (i.e., 184 public school and college teachers;
  67 courses enrolling 1,889 students)
- ☑ Funded by Local Industry (Cooper Power Systems)
- ☑ Next Phase: Video on Workplace Competencies

Lifelong Learning

- ☑ Vision of a Lifelong Learning Community
- ☑ Focus on Long - term Community Improvement Efforts
  (e.g., "Success by Six", "Born to Read", etc.)
- ☑ Collaboration Among Community Groups
  (e.g., College C of C, Business, Government,
  Education, Social Services)